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THE  
**Great Drama**  
AND  
**Other Poems**  
BY  
**HN LASCELLES**

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## X. Y. Z. and other Poems,

BY

JOHN LASCELLES.

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" . . . Mr. Lascelles indicates with singular, it might almost be said mordant, power suggestions of the dismal side of the relations of the sexes. These gloomy and powerful things stand out as singular and conspicuous evidence of Mr. Lascelles's insight."—*Brighton Herald*.

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" . . . The poems are well worth attentive perusal, even if the reader be cast into the abyss of despair. Altogether a most remarkable book."—*Whitehall Review*.

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" . . . Very remarkable for their strength and originality. They are sometimes even startling."—*Author*.

---

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THE  
**G**reat **D**rama  
AND  
OTHER POEMS  
BY  
JOHN LASCELLES.



Light and darkness; good and evil;  
Through life's mazes run!  
On man's pathway crawls the serpent;  
Shines the rising sun!



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## *PREFACE.*



*T*'HE Great Drama is not intended to be a complete work. To have made it complete would have involved covering the whole field of human action. It is intended to be a suggestive fragment, indicating a mode of thought and feeling as to the unseen universe; together with a few typical scenes from the life of the world.



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# THE GREAT DRAMA AND OTHER POEMS.

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## The Great Drama.

### The Audience.

O PEN the eyes of soul, and, undismayed  
By fleshly fear, look wonderingly through  
Rifts in the veil of sense that wraps men  
round

Like a cold mist, and from their earthbound view  
Shuts out awhile the world where spirits dwell.

The etherous vault of Heaven is full of eyes  
Of dwellers in a universe unseen,  
That ever wakeful, through the thin disguise  
Of time's stage properties, with interest watch  
Life's tragi-comic play, from age to age,

By human actors played, in varied parts  
And characters, upon earth's little stage.

God, throned upon the universe with sight  
Of all pervading power, looks at the play  
In which men masquerade,—but not to Him ;  
Before His eyes their animated clay,  
And all the robes in which they dress themselves  
As kings and peers and strut about in pride,  
Are but the husks of spirits like Himself,  
That from the sight of earthbound mortals hide  
Life's great realities.

At His right hand,  
In glorified humanity, there stands  
The, sometime, "Son of Man," exalted now  
With eyes Divine, unbound by fleshly bands,  
To watch with human sympathy the stage  
On which He played His own heroic part  
Of duty and Self sacrifice :—on which  
His brother players pierced His pitying heart.

Great hosts of angels round the throne of God,  
In robes no looms of earth could ever weave,  
Stand in their glistening ranks, like, yet unlike,

The souls of men that time's wrecked bodies leave.  
Their eyes, like stars invisible, look down  
From seeming wastes of silence and of death ;  
With kindly sympathy they watch the stage  
Of purblind players breathing mortal breath.

Souls of the earth-born,  
Spirits once way worn,  
Souls once battle torn,  
Watch from serene air  
The tinsel and glare,  
The joy and despair,  
The laughter and tears,  
The hopes and the fears,  
The hisses and cheers,  
The lures and the lies,  
The sorrows and sighs,  
The passionate cries,  
The strifes and debates,  
The loves and the hates,  
The frets and the fates,  
The blessings and banes,  
The pleasures and pains,  
That in hearts and brains

Kindle or assuage  
Men's madness and rage,  
On the old earth stage,  
Midst tumult and strife,  
And wild passions rife  
In the play of life.

Mingling with the earth-born watchers,  
Great satanic hosts—  
Weird, strange, malignant faces  
In the throng of ghosts.  
On the stage amongst the players,  
Whispering in their ears,  
Devils, with fair semblances,  
Mask malignant leers.

## The Great Drama.

### The Overture.

HARK ! ears of soul—an overture.  
Hear in its sonorous flood,  
Women's tears, like rain drops falling,  
And the dropping of the blood  
Of war-murdered men.

In a fugue comes rippling laughter  
Of the boys and girls at play,  
As they lave their feet in ocean,  
And he sprinkles them with spray,  
Flashing in the sun.

Hoarse, harsh sounds of revolution  
Herald freedom's jubilee,

Followed swift by battle thunders  
Sounding over land and sea,  
Winged with pain and death.

Now the music softly sinking  
Breathes in low and tender tones ;  
In their hearts the youths and maidens  
Each the god of love enthrones,  
Full of life and hope.

\* \* \* \* \*

The music sighs,  
As it sinks and dies :—  
The overture is done.

## The Great Drama.

### Kings and Courtiers.

**N**OW let us see the pantomime,  
Ring up the curtain !—ring !  
Before us walks in royal state  
A crowned and sceptred king.

A grovelling people bow and cringe  
Before a gilded throne,  
A robe, a crown, a sceptre, set  
With bits of sparkling stone.

They work to keep his majesty  
In idleness and vice ;  
To find him cash for wantonness  
And gluttony and dice.

His majesty must be amused ;  
The game of war will play ;  
His people to his standards flock  
To throw their lives away.

His soldiers in the hard campaign  
Face bullets and disease ;  
He takes the glory, safe at home  
In luxury and ease.

The king has a besetting sin,—  
Is on the road to Hell :  
His courtiers with compliant feet  
Walk on that road as well.

The king must wear a hideous stock  
To hide an ugly scar :  
His subjects soon adopt it too  
And wear it near and far.

The king has caught a malady,—  
His majesty is lame :  
His courtiers keep him company  
And, limping, go the same.

Thus on the shifting stage of life,  
In folly's many shapes,  
Men work industriously to prove  
Their ancestors were apes.

And as the pantomime goes on,  
The devils laugh to see  
Men acting, with wide open eyes,  
Such ghastly comedy.

## The Great Drama.

### Democrats and Voters.

A DEMOCRATIC minister sits in official state ;  
Big with official dignity, you would not know the late  
Plain Mister Dash, who, keen for votes in your provincial town,  
Some years ago, as candidate, went cringing up and down.  
A deputation waits on him to plead for infant lives,  
Against foul murderous torturings at which the state connives.

### *Spokesman of Deputation.*

We come to plead the cause of babies done to death

By tortures so prolonged, that making them draw  
breath  
For such slow, lingering pains, was foul and  
devilish crime ;

*Minister.*

Come to the point at once ; remember that my  
time  
Is precious to the State. Give me some evidence—  
Make out a cogent case—or else to Providence  
These babies I must leave.

*Spokesman of Deputation.*

There is a murderous trade—

*Minister.*

Your proofs : I must have proofs : do not the  
point evade.  
A deputation waits below : they come to me  
To ask if I will set some Irish murderers free :  
Impatient of delay, I hear their shuffling feet :  
I dare not anger them :—we might lose many a  
seat.

*Spokesman of Deputation.*

Then hear what I have seen. A spinster mother  
brought

Her poor unwanted child, well dressed in robes,  
she thought,

In an adopting home, would keep it from the cold.  
With tears she handed it, together with some gold,  
To one who met the train by which she came to  
where

I saw what I relate ;—a woman with the air  
Of a kind tradesman's wife. This woman took  
the child

And kissed and fondled it. The spinster mother,  
wild

With grief, then turned away, her eyes still  
raining tears.

I watched to see the end with heart foreboding  
fears

For what might be the fate of that unwanted life.  
The mother's back was turned : this seeming  
tradesman's wife,

Stripped off the costly clothes that mother's love  
had made,

And wrapt the child in rags. Her partner in  
the trade  
Of baby murdering came and took the child away,  
In hands that looked like claws of a fierce beast  
of prey.

*Minister.*

Be short if you have more than you would like  
to tell :  
The Irishmen below, impatient, wait my bell.

*Spokesman of Deputation.*

I followed that fierce fiend, and then I saw a sight  
To fill with anguished dreams the watches of the  
night :  
To haunt with torturing woe, all day, the waking  
brain ;  
And make the blood to boil of any man humane.  
I saw a slaughter-house, where helpless babes  
were killed  
By one in slow degrees of murderous torturings  
skilled.  
Without a spark of fire, on a December day,

Upon a brick paved floor, six helpless infants lay  
In misery and woe, to suffer and to pine  
With hunger, in their filth, like long-neglected  
swine.

Their various shrunken limbs, blue with the biting  
cold,

The progress of the work of death by stages told.  
Poor famished infants lay in this foul torture den,  
With almost fleshless bones, and faces like old  
men.

One, near death's kind release, its flesh all vermin  
scored,

Was in a laudanumed sleep, and stertorously  
snored :

And one poor innocent still sought its mother's  
breast ;—

With pale and working lips it made its piteous  
quest.

### *Minister.*

This truly dreadful case your stalking-horse  
must be,

To draw men's surplus cash to your Society.

*Several Members of the Deputation Together.*

No ! no ! we wish it was an isolated case :  
The baby-slaughtering trade both thrives and  
grows apace.

*Member of Deputation.*

The risk is small ; the trade almost the law  
confounds ;  
The baby slaughterer's fee is five to fifty pounds.

*Minister—His hand on his bell.*

You wish me to bring in a Baby Farmer's Bill :  
The case is sad enough :—and you have my good  
will :  
But babies have no votes : the Irishmen below—

*Another Member of Deputation.*

One moment more : we have some evidence to  
show  
That child insurance oft means murder to the  
child.

*Minister—Ringing his bell.*

You must no longer stay. The Irish will be wild !  
You have my sympathy :—I pigeon hole my notes  
Of all that you have said :—but—babies have no  
votes.

---

The saints looked up to God, and pitying Jesus  
wept,  
His heart suffused with love that neither waned  
nor slept :  
From His bright home amidst the universe of  
spheres,  
Hot on my heart I felt the falling of his tears.

## The Great Drama.

Gold and Paint.

*Scene I.*

THE BANQUET.

A DINNER given to Dives,  
Financier and rising M.P. ;  
Philanthropist—in an arm chair—  
Good works done by deputy.

Friend of virtuous matrons ;  
A great matrimonial catch ;  
For best and purest of daughters  
An unimpeachable match.

Successful ; envied by men ;  
The women's stock pattern for youth ;  
A safe and respectable man ;  
“ The soul of honour and truth.”

Table laid to perfection :  
The best of good viands and wine,  
Fit for a festive occasion  
When peers with plutocrats dine.

List of conventional toasts :  
Now the Queen ; the Commons ; the Lords ;  
The Army ; the Navy ; the Press ;—  
Each a stock topic affords.

The Church is recognized too,  
With a kind condescending bow,  
As a harmless poor relation  
Whose claims they please to allow.

Toasts of routine are ended  
And the diners have drunk to each :  
The guest of the evening is given :—  
A eulogistical speech.

Dives rises to thank them :  
Applause makes the rafters to ring :  
Professes himself unworthy :—  
The usual sort of thing.

*Scene II.*

THE STREET.

As Dives walks home from the dinner  
Enjoying the cool of the night,  
In a state of full swinish content  
And flattered self-conscious delight,

The wreck of a woman accosts him :  
Her face like a painted Death's head :  
With the hacking cough of consumption  
Still forced to the streets for her bread.

Eyes sunken, but brilliant like meteors :  
Soul lights looking out of the wreck  
That, abandoned, drifts to destruction  
With no guiding hand on the deck.

"Ah ! Charley, old man, well I know you! —  
O ! of course you do not know me,  
Tho' often you called me your darling,  
And dandled me oft on your knee.

Just give me a trifle, old fellow,  
That I may go home for to-night :  
I'm only the thing that you made me :—  
You need not start back in a fright !

Just a trifle, old man, it's no more,  
Than you owe the wreck that you made  
When with fondling and lies you deceived  
The girl you but sought to degrade.

In those days how dearly I loved you—  
The passionate love of my life—  
And, Charley, you know you deceived me :—  
You promised to make me your wife.

Just a trifle, that I may go home  
And sleep for awhile, and forget  
That I am the thing that you made me :—  
A trifle you could not regret.

You refuse, you damned scoundrel, to know  
The poor girl you crushed and destroyed ;

Who from father and mother and home  
With lies you so basely decoyed."

\* \* \* \*

Wild raging, blaspheming, and cursing :  
A policeman's appoaching tread :—  
The outcast is dragged off to prison,  
And Dives goes home :—and to bed.

---

When the policeman touched his hat,  
Saluting vice in gold ;  
While vice in paint, he dragged away  
With insults coarse and bold ;  
The devils laughed a scoffing laugh  
To see triumphant wrong,  
And all the saints cried out to God,  
How long ? O Lord ! How long ?

## The Great Drama.

### The City Waif.

#### *Scene I.*

##### THE DAISY CHAIN.

THE scene has shifted, and a little child  
Plays in a meadow, bright with summer  
flowers.

The dreamy sunshine of an afternoon  
Smiles on the world : with all the hidden powers  
Of Heaven and earth at peace, she deftly weaves  
A daisy chain and as she weaves she sings,  
Like a wild bird spontaneously, her song—

“ Daisies with your golden eyes  
Fringed with white and red,  
How I wonder where you come from,  
How you all are fed.

Daisies, do you eat the sunshine?  
Daisies, do you drink the dew  
When the magic touch of morning  
Makes the world anew?

Daisies, where were you last winter  
When the snow was all about,  
And Jack Frost to nip our noses  
Watched if we went out?

Were you dead or only sleeping  
Underneath the frozen ground,  
While the trees all sad and leafless  
Stood in tears around?

Were you dead or only sleeping,  
Till God kissed you all and said  
'Waken, waken little daisies,—  
Winter now has fled'?

Daisies with your golden eyes  
Fringed with white and red,  
How I wonder where you come from  
How you all are fed."

*Scene II.*

## THE OPEN GRAVE.

A cold, damp, dull November day :  
A village Church : an open grave  
Yawns to receive humanity's decay,  
And what decay portends.

The child who made her daisy chain  
And sang amidst the sunlit flowers,  
Stands near that grave, half wonder and half pain  
Upon her tearful face.

Father and child, chief mourners stand ;  
And as the Church's ancient prayers  
Of Christian hope are said, her little hand  
Convulsively grasps his ;

And when with sad and downcast eyes  
They turn away and leave in earth  
Her mother's form, the child's heart-piercing cries  
Bring tears from aged men.

“ Mother ! Mother ! Mother !  
Wake and come with us,  
To kiss your little girl  
And hear her say her prayers  
Before she goes to bed ;  
Mother dear come home !  
Mother ! Mother ! Mother !  
I will wait for you ;  
Wake Mother dear and come !  
O do not stay behind !  
O do not be unkind !  
Mother dear come home !”

*Scene III.*

THE CITY HOME.

A grimy, murky town : a low, vice-haunted  
street :  
A wet and shivering child with cold and naked  
feet  
Enters a squalid room she, trembling, calls her  
home.

Unkempt and thinly clad, her pale face pinched  
with pain ;—

How marred and changed the child who made  
her daisy chain

And sang her happy song amidst the meadow  
flowers.

Her father takes the pence her sad and pleading  
eyes

Of haunting beauty, from the soul that purifies  
The flesh it soon will leave, drew from the  
passers by.

He strikes her with his belt because she brought  
no more,

And kicks her as she writhes in pain upon the  
floor,

Calling in piteous tones upon her Mother dead.

His house companion now, an evil woman, laughs.  
They lock the door, and go to wallow in their  
slough

Of low and sensual vice ;—the child is left alone.

*Scene IV.*

## RELEASE.

Exposure, hunger, cold, will soon have brought  
release

From earthly pain, in that calm everlasting peace  
That men call death, and fear as children fear  
the dark.

The people of the town go on their heedless way  
Of pleasure, greed, and gain, from selfish day to day,  
Nor think of what thin walls hide from them as  
they pass.

With only God to hear her low, sad, moaning cry ;  
Neglected and alone the child is left to die,  
Parched with the fever thirst, upon her bed of  
rags.

God's angel hovers near : the fluttering of his  
wings

Wakes her from out a swoon : she, half delirious,  
sings

A hymn her Mother taught one peaceful Sabbath  
day

In spring, when in her loving little hand she  
brought  
A bunch of early flowers and said, in childish  
thought,  
Hard gazing at the sky, that Heaven must be like  
home.

“ Heaven is home made beautiful .  
By an eternal light  
That shines from the face of God ;  
In Heaven there is no night.

Heaven is home made shadowless ;  
The faces that are dear,  
With loving looks upon them,  
In Heaven are always near.

In Heaven there are no partings ;  
When loved ones meet again  
In Heaven, their lives are deathless ;  
In Heaven there is no pain.

In Heaven there are no sorrows,  
No heart foreboding fears,  
That shadow earth's enjoyments ;  
In Heaven there are no tears.

In Heaven is no unkindness,  
No doubting, and no care ;  
In Heaven God reigns triumphant,  
And love is always there."

---

The leering devils looked  
In mockery at the saints ;  
The saints at God, their eyes  
Full of heart-searching plaints  
That He delayed the reign  
Of universal good ;  
Of love ; of kindness ; and  
Of Christian brotherhood.

But God looked calmly from  
His time-abiding throne ;  
Mute as a sculptured sphinx,  
Cut in Egyptian stone.

## The Great Drama.

### Shifting Scenes.

I.

A RICH “philanthropist”  
Gives public parks : and sly  
Gifts to a party fund,—  
A peerage in his eye.

II.

A Minister of State :—  
The vulgar crowd admires  
The puppet in the show,  
Nor sees, behind, the wires.

## III.

A scheming mother sells  
Her daughter, fresh from school,  
As life degraded slave  
To a vice-tainted fool.

## IV.

A labourer sees the squire :  
A favour has to beg :  
Salutes a hat and coat  
Upon a human peg.

## V.

A man of grit and worth,  
Too truthful to pretend,  
His fellow-men dislike :—  
Call “a cold-hearted friend.”

---

From scene to scene the pantomime  
Is played from age to age  
By spirits, walking visible,  
Upon the worldly stage ;

So hoodwinked by stage properties,  
And tinselled robes, and flams,  
They think their plays realities ;  
Realities but shams :

While spirit hosts, invisible,  
With vision true and keen,  
Earth's serio-comic tragedy  
Watch from the world unseen ;

And see, beneath the stage glamour,  
The secret motive springs  
That rule the hearts, and shape the lives,  
Of peasants and of kings.

## Men and Nature.

THE sun had sunk to rest,  
And, as he went below,  
He left above the hills  
A glorious after-glow :

The sky was clear of clouds,  
The atmosphere serene ;  
Yet one who watched the sight,  
Some clouds would fain have seen :

In earth, and air, and sky,  
One music seemed to be :—  
How often men would mar  
Great nature's harmony !

## The Baffled Agitator.

*Agitator.*

YOUR life is deadly dull my friend,  
Just working for your bread  
In one routine of drudgery  
Until you go to bed.  
I wonder, now you have a vote  
Your manhood to inspire,  
How you can longer tolerate  
The parson and the squire.  
It must so much degrade a man  
To truckle as you do ;  
Must make it hard for him to keep  
His manhood staunch and true.

\*

\*

\*

\*

*Villager.*

It's very kind of you to say  
I ought to go to school ;  
To show you think a man like me  
A blockhead and a fool.  
Mine may be dull and drudging work  
But, Sir, I've heard it said  
A man 's a friend to all mankind  
Who makes the ground yield bread.  
I have my little cottage home ;  
I have my garden plot  
Where I can spend a bit of time  
To help to boil my pot.  
I like to watch my taters grow,  
My good wife at my side ;  
And, then, I grow a flower or two :  
My garden is my pride.  
I have a pig in yonder sty ;  
Hens in the loft above :  
It might be dull for such as you,  
But country life I love.  
And when the boys and girls come home,  
Who now are out at place,

They'll help to pay the squire his rent ;  
I hold it no disgrace  
To take a bit of help from them ;  
They earn good wages now,  
And in a year or two we may,  
Amongst us, raise a cow.  
Perhaps than some amongst my mates  
I'm better off you think :  
I burn a bit of bacca, but  
I always keep from drink.  
It's very kind of you to come  
And say my life is dull :  
You'll have to make long days to drive  
That bunkum through my skull.  
My life may be most deadly dull  
And I may be a lout  
But, mister agitating man,  
I never found it out.  
It's very kind of you to come  
And put yourself about,  
When those who have the life to live  
Have never found it out.

*Agitator.*

Well ! well ! your life may have its charms :  
I say no more of that :  
But to the parson and the squire  
To cringe and touch your hat  
Must often fret and gall a man  
Of independent mind :  
It must be hard to bend your back  
And always sit behind.

*Villager.*

I know the parsons and the squires  
Better than such as you :  
I've lived amongst them all my life,  
And know what things they do.  
They give us friendly help sometimes :  
We take it as it's meant,  
And feel a bit of gratitude  
Of which we don't repent.  
I may not be quite up to date :  
That, Sir, I do not doubt :  
I know our country village life  
Better than some that spout.

I back the parson and the squire :  
They've been good friends to me :  
I thought a man might kindness take  
And keep his liberty.  
  
The parson, many and many a time,  
Has put himself about  
For me and mine ;—the parson, Sir,  
We could not do without.  
  
He's there to give a bit of help  
When one's in trouble like :  
To give a chap a friendly pull  
Who'se tumbled in a dike.  
  
I've nothing too, against the squire,—  
Likes his own way a bit,  
But always kind and friendly when  
He sees a chap hard hit.  
  
I once was down with fever, Sir :  
My case was very bad ;  
He sent his wine to strengthen me :—  
The very best he had.  
  
And what the doctor ordered me :  
He only had to say,  
And from the Hall it surely came  
The very self-same day.

I thought he only acted out  
Our Saviour Christ's decree :  
But may be, Sir, you set no store  
By Christianity.  
This may be degradation, Sir,  
And I may be a lout  
But, mister agitating man,  
I never found it out.  
It's very kind of you to come  
And put yourself about,  
When those who have the life to live  
Have never found it out.

*Agitator.*

Why man ! yours is a hopeless case :  
You ought to read and think :  
You and your mates much need to see  
A little printer's ink.

*Villager.*

We have our little reading-room  
Where I can smoke my pipe :  
We read the papers, and we see  
Some curious things in type.

We read we are down-trodden slaves,  
And then we have our laugh :  
We may be asses, but we know  
A bit of corn from chaff.  
We may be a down-trodden lot,  
And I may be a slave :  
It's very kind of you to want  
To make me bold and brave.  
I always thought an honest man  
Who worked to earn his bread  
Was one of nature's noblemen,  
Whatever some folks said.  
We may be poor down-trodden slaves,  
And I may be a lout  
But, mister agitating man,  
I never found it out.  
It's very kind of you to come  
And put yourself about  
When men who have the life to live  
Have never found it out.

## Igdrasil.

### I.

Deep in earth strike the roots  
Of God's Igdrasil tree ;  
Down amidst dead men's bones  
Where worms hold revelry :—  
Ghouls in graves of the past,  
Down from the light of day,  
Its tiny rootlets creep  
Feeding on time's decay :  
Down where transfigured Death,  
Sheathing the sword of strife,  
Smiles upon nature's wrecks ;—  
Foster father of Life.

### II,

Dance like children around  
The great Igdrasil tree ;  
Dance and sing while you may,  
Hearts full of childish glee.

Dance like children and sing ;  
Gather the flowers that grow  
In the grass round its roots :  
Seek not to look below.  
Dance and sing while you may,  
But, breathing mortal breath,  
Seek not to look below :—  
Life is feeding on Death.

## III.

Up towards the light of Heaven  
Grows the Igdrasil high ;  
Up towards the light of Heaven,  
God and eternal sky :  
Up towards the light of Heaven  
Point all its budding shoots ;  
High bloom its sweetest flowers ;  
High hang its ripening fruits.  
Wonderful tree of life,  
Full of mystical powers !  
Look up and climb who seek  
To gather fruits and flowers.

## Raising the May-Pole.

TWO CYCLISTS APPROACH A VILLAGE, MOVING DOWN  
A GENTLE SLOPE.

*First Cyclist.*

THIS village is a quite ideal spot  
In which to spend the night.  
Content and happiness must be the lot  
Of those who have their home,  
Where Nature scatters with such lavish hand,  
Her varied beauties round.  
Those ancient trees seem consciously to stand  
As guardians of the place.  
How many generations they have seen  
Pass, and repass, beneath  
The spreading fulness of their leafy screen,  
As they went toiling on  
Life's chequered journey till, in turn, they found  
Their final resting place,

Each underneath the little grass-grown mound  
That God reserved for him  
In His own acre, near the little Church  
He and his fathers knew.

However Fortune left him in the lurch,  
In life's vicissitudes,  
Beneath that mound he had a sure release  
From worldly frets and cares.  
Near that old Church there must be rest and  
peace.

*Second Cyclist.*

That blushing whiteness waving in the breeze,  
Amidst the green of spring,  
Must be the blossom on the apple trees  
That here so much abound.  
How beautiful the red-roofed houses look  
Amongst the fresh young leaves.  
The cattle come to water at the brook  
Down in the hollow, where  
That girl trips lightly on the stepping stones,  
And sings some old sweet song,  
That comes in snatches and in merry tones,  
Straight from a bright young heart.

*First Cyclist.*

As we approach, I see the village street  
Is gay with flags and flowers :  
The very houses seem to smile and greet  
Us kindly as we pass,  
And all the village boys and girls are dressed  
For some festivity :  
We just arrive in time ! here let us rest  
And see a village fête.  
That gabled house must be the village inn :  
It is alive with guests :  
That burly man whose ample double chin  
Tells of good humoured ease,  
Must be the host. How well he seems to suit  
His ivy-covered porch,  
That smiles a welcome or a kind salute  
To every passer by.

*Second Cyclist.*

Good host, you seem alive with guests to-day  
On some rejoicing bent :  
Here at your pretty inn we fain would stay  
If you have room for us ;  
But if your house is full, we must push on  
Another mile or two.

*Host.*

By ten o'clock these guests will all have gone  
Away to their own homes.

To-night we plant our May-pole on the green,  
And they have come to watch  
The raising, and to see our May-day queen  
And maidens dance around.

My house is yours, and you, good Sirs, are free,  
If you are minded so,  
To come and join in our festivity  
And be of us to-night.

*First Cyclist.*

Your sleepy people must have missed the date  
For May festivities.  
Good host, you are just thirteen days too late :  
They should be on May-day.

*Host.*

Perhaps we are not up to date, and yet  
We know our own affairs :  
I never knew the youngest child forget  
Our May-day village feast.

*First Cyclist.*

Your May-day feast ! You must be far astray :  
Time must move backwards here.

*Host.*

Our village feast falls on the old May-day  
When kings into the woods  
A Maying went, with ladies, knights, and peers,  
To crown themselves with flowers.  
Our feast was fixed before there were leap-years :  
It is an ancient feast.  
Perhaps our fathers raised their May-poles here,  
And Saxon gleemen sang,  
Before the Norman conquerer came, and fear  
Hushed all their merry songs.  
But look, good Sirs, the western windows blaze  
With the fast setting sun !  
Give your commands : then come and see us raise  
Our May-pole decked with flowers.

## THE VILLAGE GREEN.

*Second Cyclist.*

This is a gay and animated scene.  
The band plays lively tunes,  
And stalls, and swings, upon the village green,  
Are all well patronized.  
In its long length there lies the May-pole too :  
How gay and bright it looks

In its new paint of red, and white, and blue,  
In broad alternate bands.  
It must reach ninety feet. No single tree  
Grown on our English soil  
Could ever reach so far : this pole I see  
Is braced with bolts and rings.

*Joiner in charge of works.*

All heart of oak, Sirs, heart of English oak !  
Some of the hands that felled  
The top-most splice, with many a lusty stroke,  
Are resting in their graves.

*First Cyclist.*

How can that be, when still I see it lie  
In newness and new paint ?

*Joiner in charge of works.*

At each fresh raising, nearer to the sky  
We move the lowest length :  
We taper it, and brace it to the new  
With iron bolts and rings.  
Ten days ago we to the village drew  
The oak that is the base.

*Old Man.*

Ah ! Sirs, it was a pretty sight to see  
Our stout and strong young men,  
All harnessed to the ropes, draw home that tree.  
They brought it from the woods  
Two miles away. Long years ago I went  
To draw a May-tree home :  
The father of the village now, and bent  
With age, I rode upon  
The May-pole oak, and feebly joined their cheers,  
Holding the union flag.

Each May-pole stands for more than twenty years :  
So when the next is raised,  
My work of life will have been fully gauged  
By God, who knows it all ;  
These strong young men will then be middle aged ;  
Some in their early graves.

Look gentlemen, in state upon the green  
My young grand-daughter comes.  
To-day she is to be our village queen :  
They crown her with May flowers ;  
And one by one her maids of honour come  
To kneel and kiss her hand.

The band plays ; and I seem to hear the hum  
Of many voices now,  
That sound far off and strange to my old ears  
So deaf and dull they are.  
How beautiful she looks ! That sound is cheers.—  
They now will raise the pole.

*Second Cyclist*

This is indeed a memorable sight.  
Long in our minds will live  
The May queen and her maidens, dressed in  
white,  
All wreathed with fresh blue-bells

*May Queen.*

My loving subjects you must all to work  
And our new May-pole raise.  
I know no subject of his queen will shirk  
His loyal duty now.  
The pole is heavy, but your strength is great  
If you together pull.  
On men united, even adverse Fate  
Will soon forget to frown.

Some to the windlass go, and some the ropes  
Will all together pull.  
Strength, with good will united, surely copes  
With any work or weight.

*Joiner in charge of works.*

Now boys we must obey our queen's command  
With union and good will,  
And soon our May-pole on the green will stand,  
Its weather-cock on high.  
Now pull the ropes ! You at the windlass, friends,  
A steady even wind ;  
You at the guy-ropes, as the pole ascends,  
Pay gradually out.

*First Cyclist.*

The pole, with flag and garland at its top,  
Is slowly rising : now  
It leaves its last sustaining timber prop  
And hangs awhile in air :  
At every rope both men and women pull :  
The pole is raised, and all  
The workers, subjects good and dutiful,  
Turn towards the queen and cheer :

She smiles approval, and the bandsmen play  
The good old national tune.  
Some sturdy spadesmen hasten to obey  
Her majesty's command  
To fill the pit, and make the pole secure ;  
That she may come beneath  
To hold a court for an investiture,  
And with her maidens dance.

*Joiner in charge of works.*

Most gracious queen, I humbly now report  
Your May-pole raised ; you can  
With safety come beneath to hold your court,  
And lead the dance around.

*May Queen.*

Good subject we would mark this happy day :  
Kneel down : with this blue bell  
For sword, I strike you :—rise a knight of May.  
God give you health and strength  
Long to remain upon our honour roll.  
Come maidens, let us dance  
And, as we dance, with ribbons plait the pole.  
Now band !—a merry tune.

*Second Cyclist.*

The moon is rising. What a pretty sight !  
The villagers around ;  
The dancing girls ; the tender evening light ;  
The plaiting of the pole.

*First Cyclist.*

A sight like this I never saw before :  
A subject for day dreams,  
It makes us richer, adding to our store  
Of life's bright memories.

*Second Cyclist.*

They stop !—the queen takes off her crown and  
stands  
Prepared to speak or sing,  
Her fading flowers held in her little hands.  
It is a pretty sight.

*The May Queen sings.*

“The greatest queen on earth  
Has but her little day ;  
Her crown, like mine, must fade ;  
Her pomp must pass away :

My crown of May-day flowers  
Fades with the setting sun ;  
My pageantry is past,  
My queenly work is done."

*Chorus of Maidens and Villagers.*

"God guide and keep us all,  
Our flocks and herds increase ;  
Guard well our hearths and homes,  
And give us health and peace."

*The May Queen sings.*

"As we have now rejoiced  
In this our feast of flowers ;  
When golden ears are filled  
By summer suns and showers,  
May we together meet  
And all rejoice again,  
As home, in harvest time,  
We bring the ripened grain."

*Chorus of Maidens and Villagers.*

"God guide and keep us all," &c.

*The May Queen sings.*

"Long may this May-pole stand,  
And point us to the sky,  
To teach us how to live  
Lives noble, true, and high :  
And when in after years  
Our children May-poles raise,  
May they remember God  
With gratitude and praise."

*Chorus of Maidens and Villagers.*

"God guide and keep us all," &c.

*The May Queen sings.*

"The memories of to-day  
Will be a golden chain  
To link us to our youth,  
And make us young again.  
Good night ! dear friends ; good night !  
Thanks for your loyalty :  
Long years of May-day feasts  
God grant you life to see."

*Chorus of Maidens and Villagers.*

"God guide and keep us all," &c.

## A Dream with no Awaking.

### I.

WHEN violets bloomed on mossy banks,  
Mating birds were singing,  
And gentle Spring with both her hands  
New blown flowers was flinging ;  
The light of love shone on her soul  
Transfiguring her face,  
And lending modest stateliness  
To every maiden grace.  
It played about her rosy lips  
Like sunshine on the sea,  
And smiles of calm and deep delight  
Told her heart's ecstacy.

### II.

When Autumn's winds blew damp and cold,  
And sere leaves were falling ;  
She looked as if she, listening, heard  
Spirit-voices calling.

Her eyes were like a lonely lake  
Entombed in mountains high,  
That in its tranquil depths reflects  
The evening gloom of sky.  
The smiles had vanished from her lips ;  
The light had left her face :—  
Her lover in his grave had found  
His lowly resting place.

## III.

She dreamed a strange and blissful dream :  
Her parted lover came  
And clasped her fondly to his heart,  
His face and form the same  
As in the days when first his love  
Her womanhood awoke,  
And all her heart, and all her soul,  
With answering passion spoke.  
It seemed to her the threads of life,  
Thought, and love unbroken,  
The glowing words of long ago  
All were newly spoken :  
It seemed that God's eternal loom,  
With those threads was weaving

Love's golden webs of deep delight,  
Hope's fair dreams achieving.  
Their meeting was without the clouds  
Born of earth's foreboding,  
Or canker, the frail tree of life  
Always fast corroding.  
The only difference between  
Her dream and things of sense,  
Was, that unfettered soul with soul  
Knew love was more intense.

## IV.

Death, was that strange and blissful dream,  
Dreamed with no awaking  
To sighs, and tears, and doubtful strife,  
And the world's heart aching.  
With hope despairing in her face  
That night she sought her bed :  
I drew her curtains in the morn,  
And looked,—and saw her dead.  
The morning sun streamed in and showed  
No sad trace of sorrow :  
A smile upon her parted lips  
Sunshine seemed to borrow.

## New Year's Eve.

S HALL we be here next new year's tide  
To greet the coming year ?  
The world will go its wonted way,  
But shall we still be here ?  
It matters not  
If our love flaine  
Still burns the same.

If one of us next new year's tide  
Is in another sphere ;—  
If you are left, forbear to grieve  
Or shed a useless tear :  
Your love will find  
My dwelling-place  
Somewhere in space.

This little world of time and sense,  
Close bounded by its poles,  
Is but a moment's halting place  
On the life way of souls :  
The furthest star  
By them is sought  
With speed of thought.

If I am but a step before  
Upon the wonderous way  
Of souls that walk the universe  
In life's more perfect day ;  
It matters not ;—  
God will be there ;  
Life will be fair.

## The Children are away.

THE house is full of gloom  
In sunlight at mid-day ;  
The world is out of tune :—  
The children are away !

Joyful birds are singing ;  
The flowers are bright and gay ;  
But my heart is heavy :—  
The children are away !

They link our souls to Heaven  
And teach us how to pray :  
Heaven seems further from us :—  
The children are away !

God's protecting angels  
Are round them as they play :  
Angels seem less near us :—  
The children are away !

Shining through earth's shadows,  
The lamps of God are they :  
Life may well be darkened :—  
The children are away !

There is dull heart hunger  
No memories can allay  
When the house is silent :—  
The children are away !

There is something wanting  
Seize pleasures as we may ;  
Always something wanting :—  
The children are away !

The house is full of gloom  
Without a brightening ray  
When Love's lights are absent :—  
The children are away !

## Mother and Child.

A LOOK, a tone in my voice,  
Not meant to be unkind ;  
A shadow upon the grass ;  
A whisper in the wind ;  
Some cause too subtle and deep  
For my dull sense and ears,  
Brings a cloud upon your face  
And fills your eyes with tears.  
Tell me my child, my darling,  
What makes your heart o'erflow  
With tears of sudden sadness ?—  
You say, you do not know.

God knows alone and fathoms  
Your heart's mysterious deeps ;  
I only know its shallows  
On which the sunlight sleeps ;

Some ripples of emotion  
Are all that I can see,  
Whilst springs of thought and feeling,  
In depths unknown to me,  
Hold in their still recesses  
Below life's surface gleams,  
Heart and soul imaginings  
More wonderful than dreams.

Your life is a part of mine ;  
I built your heart and brain ;  
Our hearts should beat together  
In pleasure and in pain :  
Why then do these lone heart depths  
My motherhood defy ?—  
In Heaven, God may give the power  
To know you bye and bye.

## Old Letters.

B LACK marks on pieces of paper,  
As fresh as the day they were traced  
By a hand that is dust : a form  
That death from the world has effaced.

Black marks on pieces of paper :  
No more :—but they vividly tell  
The thoughts and the feelings of one  
Who once had earth's passions to quell.

Her thoughts and her feelings come back  
As marks on her paper I note :  
Her thoughts and her feelings : her mind :—  
Herself at the moment she wrote.

That sentence was weighty as Fate :  
She paused, ere she wrote it, to think :  
To make it decided enough,  
She took a fresh dip of her ink.

To write it had cost her a pang :—  
A tear-drop fell down on the page,  
Hastily turned on her blotter  
To hide that spontaneous love gage.

Is her spirit in touch with mine  
As I read what her marks reveal ?  
Does Death but unfetter the soul ?  
Does she know what I think and feel ?

## O for one look !

O FOR one look into that world unseen  
That men have dreamed of since  
remotest time !

One glimpse as in a lightning flash, between  
Two darknesses, a landscape in the night  
Is seen and instantaneously lost.

That lightning glimpse would give more  
confidence

In what awaits us, when the great death change  
Has passed upon us, than the evidence  
Of universal dreams, and all the hopes  
And revelations of the inspired seers.

O for one glimpse !—it may not be ! perhaps  
To see would fill men's hearts with discontent  
With life, and earth, and time that must elapse  
Before, unfettered by material chains,  
God bids them grasp His great realities.

## Voices of the Past.

VOICES of the past  
Full of life and thought,  
Telling heart desires  
Brother men have sought :  
Voices of the past  
From Egyptian tombs,  
From Assyrian kings  
In their pictured rooms,  
From the shores of Greece,  
From the streets of Rome,  
From Judean hills,  
From the Indian home  
Of the Vedic hymns,  
From Arabian sands,  
From the windy capes  
Of the Saga lands ;

Voices of the past  
From the hearts of men,  
Talking in the dark  
Just across the glen  
Of dividing time ;  
Oft in life's day dream,  
Brothers of the past,  
Very near you seem.

## The Old Chief.

(January, 1896).

THE world is against you John Bull  
Its heart rank with envy and hate ;  
They think your old nose they can pull,  
That you can do nothing but prate.  
Set your back to the wall, old man,  
And plant your foot firm on the ground ;  
Old chief of the Anglican clan  
Your clansmen will rally around.

Old sire of the brave and the free,  
They think that your day has gone by ;--  
Your children from over the sea  
Know better, and tell them they lie.  
Set your back to the wall, old chief,  
And plant your foot firm on the ground ;  
From every great Anglican fief  
Your clansmen will rally around.

They think they can humble your pride ;—

Your pride is the pride of your race ;

To see them his chieftain deride

Each Anglican heart would abase.

Set your back to the wall old chief !

Your slogan, the Anglican clan,

To come to their chieftain's relief,

Will answer world-wide to a man.









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